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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR AUGUST 23, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for August 23, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

SABAH (GUNEY): Syria's Idlip Governor Atif Ganem El-Neddaf and an accompanying delegation paid a courtesy visit to Hatay Governor Abdulkadir Sari. During the visit, Sari pointed out that the two countries both have projects to start. El-Neddaf said, "I saw no borders as I was traveling to Hatay. Yet, there never exists a border between brothers."

SABAH (GUNEY): Iskenderun district's Security Directorate and Jandarma seized 400 Indian hemp roots, which were being grown in a cornfield. Security officers took one person into custody.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily reported that, "as the [Turkish] state was seeking ways to have the PKK lay down its arms", on the other hand, the soldiers in southeastern Turkey have allegedly been forcing the civilians to take up arms as village guards. Reportedly, 50 families have returned to Donertas village in Bitlis. However, the Tatvan District Jandarma Command has been forcing the returnees to enroll as village guards.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Reportedly, the soldiers are asking "bothersome" questions when villagers attempt to bring food into a village in Van's Gulpinar district. The soldiers reportedly demand information from the villagers about the food, such as, who will be eating it. The villagers are reportedly being questioned about the number of family members, when they attempt to bring in food.

OZGUR GUNDEM: It is claimed that Turkish soldiers, who are deployed in Sirnak's Silopi district, are firing across the border at a village in Iraq's Zaxo district.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) has reportedly been continuing its military operations in Tunceli. The paper reported that TAF was conducting unsuccessful operations in Tunceli's Herekol and Besta districts.

OZGUR GUNDEM: A person wounded himself when the explosive he grabbed went off as he was collecting herbs in Uludere district of Sirnak.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Some families in the U.S. want to extend help to R.G., a 15-year-old girl, who was reportedly raped and had her nose cut off her face by her brother-in-law and father-in-law in Diyarbakir in May (see press summary 05/05).

RADIKAL / HURRIYET / CUMHURİYET: MGK (National Security Council) General Secretariat sent a report on terrorism to the members of MGK in advance of today's MGK meeting. The report read that the best way to address the terrorism problem was to focus on socio-economic dimensions of the issue through paying due consideration to EU perspectives.

HURRIYET: Murat Karayilan, a senior member of the PKK, in response to the intelligentsias' call to lay down arms unconditionally, said on a Roj TV program that the PKK would definitely not cease its activities unconditionally.

ZAMAN / RADIKAL / HURRIYET / CUMHURİYET: One of three terrorists, a Syrian national, was killed when the three clashed with security officers in Macka district of Trabzon. The second terrorist was caught alive. Operations have been going on in Macka to catch the third terrorist. Security forces found 2.5 kilograms of C-4 explosives, two Kalishnikov guns, and three hand grenades outside the town. When the angry local people attempted to lynch the terrorist, who was caught alive, the security forces opened fire in the air, and removed the terrorist in an armored vehicle.

RADIKAL / ZAMAN: 50 Kurdish origin authors, artists, and thinkers extended support to PM Erdogan who initiated a new period in addressing the Kurdish issue. The declaration of the group of intelligentsia called for an unconditional end to the violence.

ZAMAN: Restoring the state of emergency rule in the southeastern region, an issue that has come onto Turkey's agenda

nowadays, is reportedly troubling the people of the region. NGOs and political party representatives in Diyarbakir issued a joint call against the possibility of renewed emergency rule. Chairperson of the Diyarbakir Chamber of Commerce and Industry pointed out that the region has suffered serious economic losses during the emergency rule. MHP Diyarbakir Provincial Chairperson said that fighting terrorism should not curtail people's rights and liberties.

ZAMAN: Sixty-two women in Southeastern Turkey have benefited from a U.S. program, which aims to train woman leaders. 23 women received 10 days of training in Ohio state in the U.S. The program drew the Turkish Parliament's attention, and a DYP (True Path Party) deputy solicited information about the purpose, resources and attendees of the program.

CUMHURIYET: The Chief prosecutor started scrutinizing statements made by Leyla Zana and other DHT (Democratic Society Movement) members. The Prosecutor's office solicited from security offices the statements delivered in public addresses and meetings. The office has started examining related news articles and accounts published on various media.

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